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SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: FRANCE SHARES U.S. VIEWS ON ISAF TRANSITION PLAN

REF: STATE 04108

¶1. (SBU) France is entirely in agreement that the ISAF transition plan adopted at NATO would be an excellent deliverable for the London conference, but should not be confused with a plan to withdraw ISAF forces. Francois Delmas of the French interagency Afghanistan-Pakistan cell said on January 15 in response to the points contained in reftel that the London conference is an opportunity to reconfirm the international community's political commitment to Afghanistan. Given the Karzai administration's difficulties in forming a government, this will be more challenging. However, that makes concrete deliverables like the ISAF operational plan annex describing the provincial transition process all the more valuable.

¶2. (SBU) Delmas also said that President Sarkozy had repeated numerous times, most recently following the death of a French soldier in Afghanistan on January 11, that France would continue its mission in Afghanistan. The GOF therefore strongly agrees on the importance of avoiding any suggestion that the ISAF transition plan implies a drawdown of international forces.

RIVKIN